

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Previously Amended) A composite substance for forming a conductive paste,
comprising:

a solvent which is compatible with an organic component included in said conductive
paste; and metal particles wetted by said solvent,

wherein said composite substance is prepared by mixing the solvent with undried *
metal particles.
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Previously Amended) The composite substance of claim 1, wherein:
said metal particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.
4. (Previously Amended) The composite substance of claim 1, wherein:
the solvent comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight of the composite substance relative to
100 parts by weight of said metal particles.
5. (Cancelled)
6. (Previously Amended) A composite substance for forming a conductive paste,
comprising:

a solvent which is compatible with an organic component included in said conductive
paste; and

metal-compound particles wetted by said solvent, wherein said composite substance is
prepared by mixing the solvent with undried metal-compound particles.
7. (Cancelled)
8. (Previously Amended) The composite substance of claim 6, wherein:
said metal-compound particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.
9. (Previously Amended) The composite substance of claim 6, wherein:

the solvent comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight of the composite substance relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal-compound particles.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Previously Amended) A conductive paste comprising:

an organic binder;

a composite substance comprising a solvent which is compatible with said organic binder, and metal particles wetted by said solvent; and

an organic solvent mixed with said organic binder and said composite substance

wherein said composite substance is prepared by mixing the solvent with undried metal particles.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Previously Amended) The conductive paste of claim 11, wherein:

said metal particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

14. (Previously Amended) The conductive paste of claim 11, wherein:

the composite substance comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight of the solvent relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal particles.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Previously Amended) A conductive paste comprising:

an organic binder;

a composite substance comprising a solvent which is compatible with said organic binder, and metal-compound particles wetted by said solvent; and

an organic solvent mixed with said organic binder and said composite substance,

wherein said composite substance is prepared by mixing the solvent with undried metal-compound particles.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Previously Amended) The conductive paste of claim 16, wherein:

said metal-compound particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

19. (Previously Amended) The conductive paste of claim 16, wherein:

the composite substance comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight of the solvent relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal-compound particles.

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Currently Amended) An electronic component comprising:

a ceramic base body; and

at least one electrode supported by said ceramic base body, wherein:

said at least one electrode is formed ~~by using from~~ the conductive paste ~~defined in~~ of claim 11.

22. (Currently Amended) An electronic component comprising:

a ceramic base body; and

at least one electrode supported by said ceramic base body, wherein:

said at least one electrode is formed ~~by using from~~ the conductive paste ~~defined in~~ of claim 16.

23. (Previously Amended) A method for manufacturing a composite substance used to form a conductive paste, comprising the step of:

adding a solvent to undried metal particles which have been washed with water, wherein said solvent is compatible with an organic component included in said conductive paste and is incompatible with water, whereby said water is replaced by said solvent.

24. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein:

said solvent is added in an amount of 3 to 30 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the total quantity of said metal particles.

25. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 23, further comprising the step of:

adding a surface active agent together with said solvent, in an amount of 0.05 to 10.0 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the entire quantity of said metal particles.

26. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 25, further comprising the step of:

adding a second solvent which is compatible with water.

27. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 26, wherein:

said second solvent is added in an amount of 0.3 to 30 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the total quantity of said metal particles.

28. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 26, wherein:

said second solvent is acetone.

29. (Previously Amended) A method for manufacturing a composite substance used to form a conductive paste, comprising the step of:

adding a solvent to undried metal-compound particles which have been washed with water, wherein said solvent is compatible with an organic component included in said conductive paste and incompatible with water, whereby said water is replaced by said solvent. *?

30. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 29, wherein:

said solvent is added in an amount of 3 to 30 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the total quantity of said metal-compound particles.

31. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 29, further comprising the step of:

adding a surface active agent together with said solvent, in an amount of 0.05 to 10.0 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the entire quantity of said metal-compound particles.

32. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 31, further comprising the step of:

adding a second solvent which is compatible with water.

33. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 32, wherein:

said second solvent is added in an amount of 0.3 to 30 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the total quantity of said metal-compound particles.

34. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 32, wherein:

said second solvent is acetone.

35. (Previously Amended) A method for manufacturing a conductive paste, comprising the step of:

mixing an organic binder and an organic solvent with the composite substance of claim 23.

36. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 35, wherein:

said metal particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

37. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 35, wherein:

the solvent included in said composite substance is present in an amount of 2 to 100 parts by weight units relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal particles.

38. (Cancelled)

39. (Previously Amended) A method for manufacturing a conductive paste, comprising the step of:

mixing an organic binder and an organic solvent with the composite substance of Claim 29.

40. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 39, wherein:

said metal-compound particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

41. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 39, wherein:

the solvent included in said composite substance is present in an amount of 2 to 100 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal-compound particles.

42. (Cancelled)

43. (Previously Amended) A composite substance for forming a conductive paste,

comprising:

a first solvent, a surface active agent, an optional second solvent, and metal particles, wherein the first solvent is compatible with an organic component in said conductive paste, the second solvent is compatible with water and the first solvent, and the metal particles are wetted by the first solvent.

44. (Previously Added) The composite substance of claim 43, wherein:

said metal particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

45. (Previously Added) The composite substance of claim 43, wherein the composite substance comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight of the first solvent relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal particles.

46. (Cancelled)

47. (Currently Amended) A composite substance for forming a conductive paste, comprising:

a first solvent which is compatible with an organic component included in said conductive paste; a surface active agent, and/or an optional second solvent which is compatible with water and the first solvent; and metal-compound particles wetted by said first solvent.

48. (Previously Added) The composite substance of claim 47, wherein said metal-compound particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

49. (Previously Added) The composite substance of claim 47, wherein the composite substance comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight of the first solvent relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal-compound particles.

50. (Cancelled)

51. (Currently Amended) A conductive paste comprising:

an organic binder;

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a composite substance comprising a first solvent which is compatible with said
organic binder, and metal particles wetted by said first solvent; ~~and~~
a surface active agent; and
an optional second solvent which is compatible with water and the first solvent.

52. (Previously Added) The conductive paste of claim 51, wherein said metal particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

53. (Previously Added) The conductive paste of claim 51, wherein the composite substance comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight of the solvent relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal particles.

54. (Cancelled)

55. (Previously Amended) A conductive paste comprising:
an organic binder;
a composite substance including a first solvent which is compatible with said organic binder, and metal-compound particles wetted by said first solvent; ~~and~~
a surface active agent; and
an optional second solvent which is compatible with water and the first solvent.

56. (Previously Added) The conductive paste of claim 55, wherein said metal-compound particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

57. (Previously Added) The conductive paste of claim 55, wherein the composite substance comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight of the solvent relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal-compound particles.

58. (Cancelled)

Please add the following new claims:

59. (New) A composite substance for a conductive paste comprising:

particles comprising a metal particle and a solvent, wherein said metal particle is wetted by said solvent, and said solvent is compatible with an organic component included in said conductive paste.

60. (New) The composite substance of claim 59, prepared by a process comprising:
adding a solvent to undried metal particles which have been washed with water,
thereby replacing said water by said solvent,

wherein said solvent is compatible with an organic component included in said conductive paste and said solvent is incompatible with water.

61. (New) A composite substance for a conductive paste comprising:
particles comprising a metal-compound particle and a solvent,
wherein said metal-compound particle is wetted by said solvent, and said solvent is compatible with an organic component included in said conductive paste.

62. (New) The composite substance of claim 61, prepared by a process comprising:
adding a solvent to undried metal-compound particles which have been washed with water, thereby replacing said water by said solvent,

wherein said solvent is compatible with an organic component included in said conductive paste and said solvent is incompatible with water.

63. (New) A conductive paste comprising:
an organic binder;
a composite substance comprising particles comprising a metal particle and a solvent;
and
an organic solvent mixed with said organic binder and said composite substance;
wherein said metal particle is wetted by said solvent, and said solvent is compatible with said organic binder.

64. (New) The conductive paste of claim 63, wherein said composite substance is prepared by a process comprising:

adding a solvent to undried metal particles which have been washed with water, thereby replacing said water by said solvent,

wherein said solvent is compatible with said organic binder and is incompatible with water.

65. (New) A conductive paste comprising:

an organic binder;

a composite substance comprising particles comprising a metal-compound particle and a solvent; and

an organic solvent mixed with said organic binder and said composite substance;

wherein said metal-compound particle is wetted by said solvent, and said solvent is compatible with said organic binder.

66. (New) The conductive paste of claim 65, wherein said composite substance is prepared by a process comprising:

adding a solvent to undried metal-compound particles which have been washed with water, thereby replacing said water by said solvent,

wherein said solvent is compatible with said organic binder and is incompatible with water.

67. (New) An electronic component comprising:

a ceramic base body; and

at least one electrode supported by said ceramic base body,

wherein said at least one electrode is prepared from the conductive paste of claim 63.

68. (New) An electronic component comprising:

a ceramic base body; and

at least one electrode supported by said ceramic base body,

wherein said at least one electrode is prepared from the conductive paste of claim 64.

69. (New) An electronic component comprising:

a ceramic base body; and

at least one electrode supported by said ceramic base body,

wherein said at least one electrode is prepared from the conductive paste of claim 65.

70. (New) An electronic component comprising:

a ceramic base body; and

at least one electrode supported by said ceramic body,

wherein said at least one electrode is prepared from the conductive paste of claim 66.

SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENTS

The amendments to Claims 21, 22, 47, and 51 are supported by the claims as originally filed, and throughout the specification. Applicants note that the first line of Claim 47 was inadvertently omitted from the “clean copy” of Claim 47 (but was present in the marked-up copy of Claim 47) in the Amendment filed October 24, 2002. In order to ensure that all of the amendments to the claims are correctly entered, Applicants have used the revised amendment format recently permitted by the Office, in which all of the claims are listed. New Claims 59-70 are supported throughout the specification, including page 1 of the specification which describes electronic devices comprising, e.g., electrodes prepared from the claimed composite substance and conductive paste. No new matter is believed to be added by entry of these amendments. Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16, and 18, 19, 21-37, 39-41, 43-45, 47-49, 51-53, 55-57, and 59-70 are active.